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TOMMY AND GRIZEL.

No book in recent years has been awaited with such great expectation as Barrie's sequel to "Sentimental Tommy," and no book is likely to prove a greater disappointment. And yet, in spite of the inevitable disappointment, it is a great and, in the main, a successful work. Perhaps the disappointment is greatest to those who read the book as a serial; for it was impossible in this way to keep up with all the small points preparing for the end, which would be thus made less natural, as the plot would be thrown out of proportion. Serial publication is a detriment to any novel, and the greater the novel the more it suffers.

"Tommy and Grizel" is rightly named, for the book is entirely about them. Indeed, it might be more accurately called "The Love of Tommy and Grizel," for that is the whole story. It may not, therefore, make so wide an appeal as "Sentimental Tommy." But even this is doubtful. There is nothing in the world so important as love, and there are few to whom it has lost its interest. If the appeal is less wide, it is deeper.

The book is almost unique among love stories in that it is a study of unrequited love—and that, the love of the heroine. By a curious coincidence this is also the theme of Mrs. Ward's latest novel, "Eleanor," and a comparison is at once suggested. In vain; the two authors, our two greatest novelists, differ so much in thought, in style, and in methods of treatment, that there is no common standard. It can only be said that if Mrs. Ward's work is stronger and deeper Barrie's is more human, and certainly Grizel is far more lovable than Eleanor.

In one thing the Barrie admirers will not be disappointed: they will find here in its perfection Barrie's own individual, inimitable, fascinating style, not comparable to any writer's since Stevenson. There is always the right word, and it is always in the right place. His touches are always just right,

and so skillful that they are felt and not perceived—unless special attention is directed to them. The charm is increased by the dialect, that gives a quaintness, an unaccustomed familiarity, that increases the illusion. Is it something in the Scotch, or in the skill of its writers, that it is generally excepted from the growing and justifiable dislike for all dialect?

Barrie has also settled a question once much debated, as to whether the modern reader will stand a sympathetic, confidential attitude of the author toward his story, a chorus to the story, and a friend and commentator to the reader. He will surely like it if the author is enough of a genius to take the rôle successfully. Barrie has made a success as great in its way as Thackeray.

Next to this confidential relation, and a part of it, the greatest charm of the book is Barrie's humor, also here in its perfection, a humor in no writer so delicate, so sure, so tender, so forceful. It is not only humor of statement, but also humor of situation, and always it is at one with the pathetic and serious story. For if it is one step from the ridiculous to the sublime, it is but half a step from the humorous to the pathetic.

Only the most extended quotation could adequately illustrate these characteristics, which anyway are familiar to all Barrie's admirers. Examples abound on every page; for the best, take Tommy's remarkable proposal to Mrs. Jerry—a foreshadowing of the later tragedy—and the scene in Rotten Row when she cannot remember his name, nor he his proposal; Corp's wooing of Lavinia, and announcement of his success; the saving of the nutcracker-faced woman's grandson, and its reward at the tea party; the scene with the burglars, with its characteristic ending—put in the story, by the way, since its publication as a serial; and, best of all, the scene between Tommy and Aaron, while waiting for Elspeth's decision.

In the latter part of the book the incidents are too clearly connected with the story to stand out separately, though they are powerfully portrayed—notably Grizel's wild journey—and

the humor of the situation is wholly lost in the pathos, even the humorous touches of the author being scarcely felt.

It is quite impossible—or is that only a personal idea?—to assume a critical attitude to Grizel; we love her far too much. We know her as we do our dearest friend, and we do not stop to analyze. But if an analysis must be made, the charm of her character, apart from its naturalness, is its strength and its truth, and the conviction that she is a thoroughly honest woman, without a particle of coquetry—if that is the proper description for quite the opposite quality. For this very reason, it seems impossible for Tommy to love her; but this is only apparently so, for at bottom he cared as much for her as he possibly could for any one. And though many men imagine, like Tommy, that coquetry alone is attractive, women like Grizel in real life are never without adorers. It is strange how outworn ideas, inherited from the time when the weak, clinging, vinelike, wheedling, dishonest woman was the ideal, still persist in current speech and literature, while in reality they have almost ceased to exist and we have quite ceased to admire them.

If there is a fault in Grizel, it is that Barrie has insisted too much on the element of heredity. On the other hand her ideas on marriage and Barrie's own strong but delicate handling of all important questions usually avoided are admirable.

Though Grizel is the more pleasing, Tommy is the more important character. He is a type, and one new in fiction. He is the artistic nature carried to its farthest development, a portrayal of what a man is in whom the imagination makes the ideal more real than the actual.

It is the great question of the book whether Tommy is a consistent and possible character. We know from one of Stevenson's own letters (July 29, 1894, Vol. II., p. 416) that "Sentimental Tommy" was drawn from him, the chief likeness being in "the literary temperament and passion for the *mot propre*," and that Tommy was not to be Stevenson when grown up. In spite of this warning, it is suggested that much of Tommy was consciously taken from Stevenson. It seems very likely.

There are many similarities, and these will be impressed on any one reading Stevenson's letters. But there is, apparently, one fundamental difference so far as we can judge from the biography and letters. Stevenson's sentiment and artistic temperament was the real self; and, being real, it was true and usually beautiful. In Tommy it was not himself, and made him and itself both false. It may be doubted whether a man of such a temperament ever realized it, or felt his other self, so completely as does Tommy. Many of us have known approximations to the type, men who were controlled by their impulses and imagination, but none to whom this was a fact so conscious. But if not wholly natural, it is true as a type, a slightly magnified example, one in which the peculiarities are brought to a *reductio ad absurdum*. Possibly in some of them Barrie is himself the prototype, and he has set up tendencies and faults he has seen in himself in a man of straw on which to be avenged.

At any rate, it is somewhat in this way that the chief ethical lesson is won from the book. Such a sentimental character as Tommy is essentially selfish, in spite of all the apparent and superficial unselfishness. This is only a transferred selfishness; stirred because the deeds of kindness give a temporary pleasure, or the suffering of others a momentary pain. Himself is all the world to such a man, and he is the more incapable of changing it in that he is wholly incapable of realizing it. This is the reason why he cannot really love, and why, in spite of all his other good qualities, it is a misfortune to be dependent on him for happiness.

What will be the greatest disappointment to most readers is the fatal ending, and they will find it hard to get over. It is not that the book ends unhappily, for this is no valid objection, but that it seems not logical, not an artistic necessity. So far as was possible in such a nature, Tommy did love Grizel from the first. In real life would he not have known it, and would he have felt its deficiency? After his two years of devotion to Grizel, could he then have failed to love and remain constant? With some hesitation, all these questions

must be answered otherwise. Given the character, and some such result is inevitable. But surely the method of his death might have been different. It seems to have been suggested by a sentence in the letter of Stevenson referred to above. After saying that Barrie seems anxious to impress the fact that Tommy is not to be he when grown up, something suspicious, Stevenson adds: "I cannot bear this suspense; what is it? It's no forgery? and *am I hangit?*" It may be a grim example of Barrie's humor, like a flash light playing on a corpse, and as ghastly, or it may be the author felt that Tommy deserved no better fate.

Nothing is truer, at least outside mathematics, than that the whole and the sum of its parts are not equal. In this case the parts are the greater—and so great that in spite of all they insure the book success and fame.

WINFIELD P. WOOLF.